

from Quebec, one of deals from Miramichi, a small steamer cargo of wood pulp from Drammen, and a cargo of deals from Archangel.

As regards the state of the market, we may quote a remark made by one of our leading merchants, that "it's better to do nothing than work for nothing," implying that whatever is done is without remuneration, and the question now is, whether it is best to continue the business for the sake of the connections or to stand off until things improve.

We have heard figures mentioned for Midland delivery of spruce deals which we fear to quote, as they are so low that it is a mystery how any one can do them and make both ends meet. Importers are all holding off in expectation of consignment cargoes being thrown on the market later on, which would be sure to go below the present prices.

With regard to mining timber, there is not by a long way the usual quantity of offering in the market, still there is no prospect of improvement.

LIVERPOOL.

The *Timber Trades Journal* of July 31st says:—The first vessels with cargoes of timber from Quebec are now getting well on with their discharge; but we regret to see very little of either waney board pine or oak going into consumption. This is widely different from what was the usual case in former years, when considerable lines of both these descriptions of wood were generally forwarded up the country to the large railway companies, machinists, or wagon-builders. At present, however, none of this class of consumers appear to be in the market; the great machinists probably from want of work in their department, owing to the depressed condition of the cotton industry, and the great railway companies because they are desirous to limit their expenditure upon rolling stock as far as is prudent.

The financial collapse of the Manchester Ship Canal project will, no doubt, have a depressing effect on business in this district, as a great number of people were looking forward to the commencement of the works with considerable interest, and the grievous disappointment which has so rapidly followed the bright hopes which were held out by the promoters of the scheme, whereby the resuscitation of trade in the neighborhood was to be effected, will cast a damp on all those immediately concerned, as well as upon others indirectly interested.

Our market is still in the same depressed condition as ever, nor do we see any immediate prospect of improvement, prices, if there be any change, are still in favor of the buyer in nearly every instance, and the general feeling here is that those who are doing the least business are perhaps to best off in the end.

No public sales of whitewoods are announced nor can we learn of any in contemplation, the unsatisfactory results of the last auctions having driven the brokers to dispose of their consignment cargoes by private treaty in preference to selling them in public.

This will not matter much to the consumer in the long run, for he will be well looked after by the merchants' travellers, and the competition is so keen that an order will not be refused if there is anything in it, however small it may be, so that he will probably do as well without leaving home as he would do here by attending personally, and will save travelling expenses at any rate.

LONDON.

The *Timber Trades Journal* of July 31st says:—At present, from what we gather, £10 to £10 5s. is the current quotation for 3rd Quebec regulars ex ship, and that the price has not been an obstacle to sales seems evident by their being so few deals remaining in first hands. A leading Quebec house recently told us that they had fewer pine deals of any kind in the docks at the present time than at any time previously.

We had some slight expectations that the improvement noticeable in last week's reported London dock deliveries over those of 1885 would have been maintained for the remaining portion of the season, but it appears that the depressed condition of things then apparent is to reappear in an aggravated form the present

year. We are already short of the consumption of last year some 12,000 standards on deals and battens, and 2,000 standards on flooring. The cause of this was principally laid at the door of the stimulus imparted a twelvemonth ago by what was known as the Russian war scare, but this has been insupportable by subsequent records, and we must set down the lessened consumption to the true cause, viz., an utter stagnation in trade, and though last year was essentially a bad one the present is a great deal worse. That free-on-board prices have kept their tone is probably due to the discretion of those who had the controlling power avoiding sending cargoes on the market.

The arrivals recorded this week to the Thames are 56, against 63 that had come forward in the corresponding interval twelvemonths ago. Last year the week's list to the Surrey Docks did not include a single pine cargo, this time they are credited with a pine and a spruce cargo, both for Messrs. Price & Pierce. The Millwall docks have 14 cargoes this week, against seven at a corresponding date 1885. Of these two are pine, viz., the Victory, from Quebec, with 320 standards of 3rd and 4th pine, for Messrs. Browning & Co., and the Fernholme, from Montreal, with about 700 standards, for Messrs. Bryant, Powis & Bryant, Limited. We notice that the Regent's Canal dock is the recipient of a cargo of pine deals per the Oscar.

Freights continue depressed, and we note Quebec and London has just been done at 42s. 6d., the lowest charter we have heard of from this port for a sailing ship; but we understand it cannot be repeated. Tonnage is offering on this side to go out with the hope of finding charterers. In respect to the lower ports we learn that tonnage from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia is only placeable with difficulty, most of the charters being filled up. We understand some of the Pensacola charters are holding off, and are not tempted to fix even at 87s. 6d. and 85s. for sawn stuff. Tonnage, generally, is declining with very little prospect of improvement, and the action of shipowners in withdrawing their vessels has not had the result we hoped it would, and though ships continue to be taken out of the market, there are, unfortunately for owners plenty of other to take their place. We furthermore learn that one of the large Pensacola shippers contemplates opening his mills much earlier than usual prices being so unprofitable; this certainly won't help freights.

There was a capital muster of the trade at Messrs Churchill & Sims sale on Wednesday, the back benches being well occupied.

There was some spirit in the bidding for the whitewood. The St. John spruce planks ex Avoca, however, went remarkably cheap, at an almost uniform price of £5 5s., buyers making no distinction between the 11 and 9 in., though a few of the lots of the latter fell at £5. The 3rds Quebec, per the Craigallion, also planks, went at similar values; here again the 9 inch were valued as the planks. The Riga crown white 3x11 seemed stationary at £6 15s., and it was a most feature of this sale how prices held such uniformity, which may be accepted as pretty plain evidence of the close competition maintained by merchants when re-selling. The parcel per Mathilde Jost, with no exception, went at precisely similar prices to the other Riga goods. The exception we refer to was lot 282, which was carried by the competition another 10s., the buyer, a leading merchant, getting this solitary lot for £7 5s., against the £6 15s. at which his neighbors secured their portions. This was the only lot of crown having 22 ft., and that may be the solution of the mystery.

The ash planks and boards per the Durham City seemed to be at a discount. A leading pine buyer came to the rescue, and appropriated them at 1s. 3d., a foot cube, otherwise it is doubtful what would have been their fate.

There was only a few odd parcels of Quebec pine offered, and prices would not be a sufficient index to the market if we particularized them.

SHERIFF McQUARRIE, of Rat Portage, reports that things are looking up in that district; the Rainy River Lumber Co.'s mill has started and the saw mill is being got ready for work.

LATH MANUFACTURE.

We learn from a Saginaw paper that there are about forty saw mills on the Saginaw river, Michigan, in which lath mills are operated the production running from 300,000 to 4,000,000 lath each, and that the manufacture of lath is almost as unsatisfactory as that of shingles, as regards prices. "It is true there has been a fair demand, and shipments exceed those of last year up to this time, but there are not going to be any fortunes made this year at \$1 15, and sales have been made at that figure, though the quotations run all the way up to \$1.40, though \$1.25 is about the average asking price. The lath product of the Saginaw river mill during a series of years shows:—

	Product.
1876.....	72,702,660 pcs.
1877.....	72,614,999 "
1878.....	53,236,075 "
1879.....	65,969,000 "
1880.....	65,663,883 "
1881.....	65,983,750 "
1882.....	94,703,800 "
1883.....	106,132,490 "
1884.....	127,346,000 "
1885.....	80,931,400 "

The aggregate capacity of the mills has been reduced about 10,000,000 pieces by the destruction of mills. So that the out-turn for the year 1885 is scarcely over the average of the past ten years. The largest output of any one concern was that of a Bay City firm, Birdsell & Barker, who manufactured four millions and a quarter of pieces.

WOOD-WORKING PATENTS.

The following list of patents relating to the wood-working interests, granted by the U. S. patent office, July 27, 1886, is specially reported by Franklin H. Hough, solicitor of American and foreign patents, 925 F street, N. W. Washington, D. C., who will furnish copies of patents for 25 cents each.

346,133—Chuck, lath—C. A. Singer, New York, N. Y.

346,164—Lath—J. Judson, Rochester, N. Y.

346,324—Lath, steady rest for—J. Seibert, St. Louis, Mo.

346,179—Saw, drag—A. S. Topping, Metamora, Ohio.

346,383—Saw mill—L. O. Orton, Philadelphia, Pa.

346,241—Saw table—H. J. Thompson, Ogema, Wis.

346,097—Sawing machine—W. H. Finn, Oswego, N. Y.

346,369—Shingle sawing machine—I. M. House, Gravenhurst, Canada.

PATENTS ISSUED AUG. 3.

346,656—Saw, band—D. Simonds, Fitchburg, Mass.

346,541—Saw filing machine—J. W. Gibson and C. C. Harris, Denver, Col.

346,844—Saw swaging machine—E. Dunning, Bluffton, assignor of one-half to S. Davies, Muskegon, Mich.

SUPERVISOR OF CULLERS' OFFICE

Comparative statement of timber, masts, b w sprits, spars, staves, etc., measured and culled to date, at Quebec:—

	1884.	1885.	1886.
Waney White Pine	1,104,142	1,093,921	1,144,224
White Pine.....	1,113,623	1,004,303	744,301
Red Pine.....	189,931	43,313	157,564
Oak	450,478	995,529	450,015
Elm	599,341	636,157	332,441
Ash	335,370	178,338	92,414
Basewood	4,415	47	218
Butternut	1,068	3,018	192
Tamarac	77,063	1,983	3,785
Birch and Maple ..	163,111	305,502	154,129
Masts and Bowsprits	— pcs	— pcs	— pcs
Spars	32 pcs	17 pcs	— pcs
Std Staves	16,621.23	36,831.21	36,131.1
W. I. Staves	69,812.23	67,720.04	81,126
Brl Staves	6,421.13	48,530.7

JAMES PATTON,

Supervisor of Cullers.

Quebec, 16th July, 1886.

THE forest fires in Marathon and Clar counties, Wisconsin, communicated to the towns of Spencer and Colby, laying the former in ashes and considerably destroying the latter.

MECHANICAL EXPANSION.

Every way has been studied out, and carefully tested, to make an arbor or a mandrel a little larger in diameter, and the screw tap and expansion reamer have been very successful in this respect, and if the same features could be applied to the driving pulley of a machine it would make one of the best means for making a variation in speed. It has been applied to the cross-head pin made to expand by internal wedge-key work, that will take up for wear at this end of the connecting rod, but the cross head pin only needs a small portion of an arc on opposite sides to be provided for. Something of this kind may yet be applied to the crank pin, as it is said that this portion of an over-hang crank is likely to get out of round and pinch in the boxes if keyed up to take out all the thump and pound. When a plug tap and a fluted reamer is made so as to be expanded, they must be handled with care, as the most of them, when in one solid piece, are none too strong for the average workman, yet they are handy tools, and the reamer needs grinding on centres to keep it anywhere near accuracy. If the expanding mandrel was not subject to such a heavy duty it would be just the thing around a repair shop to handle the different gear wheels that must be provided for; then a wheel blank could be bored out at once just the exact size and held on centres without turning down an arbor for the occasion. A slight degree of enlargement is all that is required to meet the demand of a number of sizes that are used. One trouble has been to make one size do all the work, making a very compact device for a small bore, and a very inaccurate machine for heavy work. It is much better in providing for the enlargement of every appliance to expand a little, and do it well, than to be spreading all out of semblance with no dependence to be placed on anything. If an expansion shaft pulley were to receive some such attention it would be received with welcome, as it would put an end to soft-wood lagging, and the demand for old belting to test some of the recipes for cementing leather to cast-iron pulleys, or the paper mache arrangement for winding on a lagging in a moment.—*Boston Journal of Commerce.*

FOREST FIRES.

Science has reconed theories to account for very common things. Some of these theories seem to the unscientific to be absurd, but others cannot be disregarded. Here is something from a druggist in Maine, with regard to forest fires: "It is reasonable to assume that many fires originating in the woods are not caused intentionally by boys, gunners, &c., but by natural causes and the sun. It is a fact that most of our forest fires occur when the resin or gum is exuding in the warm season and in forests composed chiefly of soft woods of resinous trees—the pine spruce, hemlock and hemlock. It is often observed that these species of trees exude a resin that in losing its volatile element, hardens and for a short time before becoming opaque makes a very good magnifying lens, and powerful enough to set fire to very dry punky materials. Admitting these conditions, then to start a forest fire in the dry season among resinous woods, we require the sun shining on one of those natural sun glasses, and back of it in the focus some suitable material, as dead bark, wood, or best of all, that dead, dry, mealy condition of soft woods caused by insects." One can hardly deny Dr. Roche's statement of these conditions; the resinous forest, the dead bark, the "punky" and susceptible wood. But the lens made of resin is something new to the non-scientific woodman and indeed to the non-scientific reader. However, when one reads in the *Chronicle* the doctor's account of the fire set in his window by the rays of the sun passing through a show bottle filled with colored alcohol, he is impressed with the notion that there are a good many agencies contributing to the annual fire-waste. There is this to be said, however, that if this theory of the origin of forest fires be correct, "what we are going to do about it" is not easily seen. It seems as if the forces of nature with her myriads of burning glasses in the depth of the forest, were too much for any efforts of man.—*Monetary Times.*

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